



Periodic Medical Exams for Military Personnel

As of Jan 2003, every active duty soldier, 30 years of age and older, must have a physical exam on record that is not more than five years old.

Some military medical exams conducted for purposes other than the periodic exam may now be used to comply with the periodic exam requirement.

If you haven't had a physical exam in the past five years, schedule one at your Military Treatment Facility today!

WHY ARE PERIODIC PHYSICAL EXAMS IMPORTANT?

Exams help ensure a fit and healthy force. Just as a car needs periodic maintenance to maximize performance, the soldier needs a periodic check up to ensure he or she remains healthy. These exams give you a chance to discuss your health care concerns with your primary care provider.

During the exams, soldiers are informed of any health risks such as tobacco use, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. Potential lifestyle changes are identified to help prevent diseases like heart attacks and strokes. Exams are also used to perform appropriate screening tests, to initiate treatment of illnesses, and to meet certain administrative and legal requirements.

WHEN ARE THESE EXAMS REQUIRED?

Beginning at age 30, every soldier on active duty must have a physical exam on record that is not more than five years old. Special Forces and divers must have an exam every three years. General officers have a yearly requirement for exams.

Military medical exams that are conducted for purposes other than the periodic exam (for example, school physicals) may be used to comply with the periodic exam requirement. If the military exam did not include all areas required in the periodic exam, soldiers only need to take the additional tests covered in the periodic exam.

The additional tests for soldiers age 40 and older will now be performed at the first periodic exam due at or after age 40.

In addition to the periodic medical exam, women on active duty in the Army must have the following exams:

- ✓ Annual breast and pelvic exams, including a pap smear to screen for cervical cancer, for all women, regardless of age
- ✓ Chlamydia screening test, for women under age 25
- ✓ A mammogram, every two years for women at ages 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, and 50, then every year after age 50

WHAT AREAS ARE COVERED DURING PERIODIC EXAMS?

The soldier receives a head-to-toe history and physical exam, which includes the following tests:

- ✓ Height, weight, temperature, and pulse
- ✓ Blood pressure
- ✓ Distant and near vision, hearing test
- ✓ Blood tests for anemia and cholesterol
- ✓ Urine tests for sugar and kidney function
- ✓ HIV testing

Soldiers 40 years of age and older receive the following additional tests:

- ✓ Eye test for glaucoma
- ✓ Fasting blood sugar, fasting lipid profile
- ✓ Microscopic exam of the urine
- ✓ Rectal exam with stool checked for blood
- ✓ An electrocardiogram (EKG)
- ✓ Cardiovascular Screening Program evaluation
- ✓ Prostate examination and a prostate specific antigen (PSA) test for men

WHY ARE THESE EXAMS/TESTS DONE?

Heart disease and stroke are the first and third leading causes of death in the USA. The periodic medical exam evaluates each soldier for the major risk factors, including tobacco use, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, physical inactivity, poor nutrition, and family history.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the USA. In the periodic medical exam, all soldiers are evaluated for the risk factors of tobacco use, poor nutrition, being overweight, physical inactivity, and family history. Screening exams are done for early detection of cancers of the skin, colon, rectum, breast, cervix, testicle, and prostate.

If any risk factors or abnormal tests are identified, medical help is given to lessen these health risks and to maximize soldiers' health.

Fact sheet available:

<http://www.chppmeur.healthcare.hqusareur.army.mil/>

References and more Information:

1. AR 40-501: Standard of Medical Fitness, Sep 2002 http://docs.usapa.belvoir.army.mil/jw2/xmldemo/r40_501/head.asp
2. Guide to Clinical Preventive Services, 3rd Edition, 2003 <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/cps3dix.htm>
3. US Department of Health and Human Services <http://www.hhs.gov/specificpopulations/index.shtml>

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